

# **CIRCLE THE PEAK**

**Led by James Hurd Nixon**



Join a gathering and a walking meditation around the peak of Mt. Tamalpais, honoring Mt. Tam, where the Planetary Dance began, and the history of the Planetary Dance, particularly the roles of the legendary dancer Anna Halprin and the renowned Huichol shaman Don José Matsuwa. In the walking meditation, we will pursue some of the lessons that the past, the present, the future, and that which is beyond time have to teach us.

**Sunday, May 7, 2023**  
**East Peak, Mount Tamalpais**

Gather at 10:30 a.m.—event begins promptly at 11 a.m.  
Park in lot at East Peak, Mt. Tam (exact change parking fee: \$8; \$7 seniors)  
Meet in picnic area (past bathrooms) at head of Verna Dunshee Trail  
For more info, please contact [jameshurdnixon@gmail.com](mailto:jameshurdnixon@gmail.com)  
For park info: [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=471](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=471)

## The Event

For many years, when the Planetary Dance was celebrated in Santos Meadow on Mt. Tamalpais, we prepared, in part, with a walking meditation around the peak. This year, with the Planetary Dance scheduled for June 4 in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, this walking meditation—Circle the Peak—is being offered on May 7, as a way to prepare for the Planetary Dance. Circle the Peak is also a ritual in its own right, a way to reach into our deepest selves and prepare for the coming year.

## The History

Circle the Peak was first celebrated in 1983, the third year in the Planetary Dance's history. In 1981, in response to the terrible reality of the Trailside Killer's murders of women on Mt. Tamalpais, Anna Halprin led a ritual to capture the killer and liberate the mountain symbolically. Thankfully, shortly after the ritual, our prayers were answered and the killer was captured.

A few months later, Don José Matsuwa, a 107-year-old Huichol shaman, and Brant Secunda led a Dance of the Deer ceremony at Anna's studio on the shoulder of Mt. Tamalpais. After the ceremony, Anna told Don José about our ritual. Don José responded that Mt. Tamalpais was a holy mountain and that what we had done was significant, but if we really wanted to succeed in our intention, we needed to repeat the ritual for five years. We took Don José's injunction seriously, and in 1983 Don José and Brant came back to join our third ritual, Return to the Mountain. They led us in the first Circle the Peak.

As we walked around the peak on the Verna Dunshee Trail, Brant told us that the door to the spirit world had opened for Don José, that his spirit was walking around the spirit mountain while his physical body walked with us. As we proceeded, Don José spoke of Mt. Tam's spiritual history. We could see he was deeply moved. He said that, in a vision years ago, he had seen himself leading us on this trail and that a worldwide movement for peace would emerge from what we were doing. We are continuing that story to this day.

## The Score

1. Gather in the picnic area at the beginning of the Verna Dunshee Trail
2. Share stories of Anna Halprin, Don José Matsuwa, the beginning of the Planetary Dance, and our astrological moment
3. Prepare for the walk
4. Walk around the peak of Mt. Tam, stopping in each of the four directions to ask a question and engage in vision meditation to receive an answer
  - ❖ In the South, ask what our past has to teach us
  - ❖ In the East, ask what our present has to teach us
  - ❖ In the North, ask what our future has to teach us
  - ❖ In the West, ask what that which is beyond time has to teach us
5. Return to the picnic area where we began and share what we have learned from our visions